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Do we expect that faculty members who require that students participate in class-related off-campus excursions notify faculty colleagues in advance of the excursion?

Submitted by Clara Krug

3/2/2006

Question:

Do we expect that faculty members who require that students participate in class-related Off-campus excursions notify faculty colleagues in advance of the excursion:

1. If the excursion occurs on a weekday when classes are in session, and students will be absent from these colleagues' classes?
2. If they expect that these colleagues excuse these students from class for the excursion?
3. If students expect that faculty whose classes they miss will allow them to submit and receive credit for coursework due on the date of the excursion, but submitted at a later date?

Rationale:

The courses (of which I know) whose faculty apparently expect that students be excused from colleagues' classes are offered in the College of Science and Technology and the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences.

Response:

3/6/06 From time to time, students may miss classes due to field trips for another class, club activities, and athletic competitions. A faculty member filed a Request for Information with the Faculty Senate concerning notification and excusing such absences.

All faculty and sponsors of such events should be aware that University Policy (section 309 of the Faculty Handbook) gives individual faculty members the right and responsibility of establishing a written attendance policy for their courses.

If you are a sponsor of any such activity, please be aware that another professor has the right to determine if the absence will be excused. A respectful, written notification well in advance of the event is the best way to both notify another professor of a student's planned absence, and (possibly) have that absence excused.

If you require students to participate in field trips, please provide written notification in advance so that they may inform other professors. If you are the recipient of such notification, please try to work with any students within the framework of your attendance Policy.

Patricia Humphrey, Faculty Senate Moderator

3/27/2006: Clara's second request concerned excusing student absences for field trips, etc. The basic answer to this question is that Section 309 of the Faculty Handbook gives each faculty member the right and the responsibility of creating their own attendance policies. Whether an absence is excused or not is not up to the sponsoring instructor; it is up to the instructor whose class would be missed. So, if you are asked to excuse an absence, it is up to you to deal with it in terms of the framework of your own individual attendance policy. I would ask faculty members to try to cooperate with others, but in the end the decision is your own.

Clara Krug (CLASS): About the information item concerning receiving a request to excuse students for faculty colleagues' field trips. I read the section that you mentioned in the Handbook, and it seems to me to apply more to what I expect of my students myself in the classes. What would need to happen for there to be included in the Handbook some statement about what faculty should expect their colleagues to do when faculty ask us to excuse their students? This has happened to me multiple times this semester, and continues to happen since I submitted this information item.

Linda Bleciken (Provost): I am going to ask Dr. Heaston or Candace Griffith to address this question. I am not certain about the current status of the assembly of the new Faculty Handbook, because I do not know exactly where we are in that process, Clara. Amy Heaston: It is not in the final format yet. We are still in the draft stages, and we still have a short window of time to make any changes, so if Senate wants to recommend and endorse any changes it would need to be done before the end of the semester.

Linda Bleciken (Provost): Thanks.

Pat Humphrey (COST) Chair, Senate Executive Committee: So, apparently, there would be time to make a motion to amend that section.

Clara Krug (CLASS): Next time; thank you.